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CRAM COURSE NO. 2: BIOLOGY

The grisly shadow of final exams looms over us, so today in this column instead of merry quips and homely saws, you will find hard facts—quick erasm courses to help you through the ordeal ahead.

Last week I gave you a rapid survey of Modern European History. Now let us turn to Biology.

Biology is divided into several phyla, or classes. First is the protozoa, or one-celled animals. All life stems from the one-celled animal. Over a space of millions of years, life slowly evolved until today we have animals with as many as 12 cells. Some larger mammals claim they have 14 or 16 cells, but you know how larger mammals lie.

The second class of animals is the *peripherea*—a shadowy category that borders often on the vegetable. Take, for example, the sponge. The sponge definitely *is* an animal. The washcloth, on the other hand, is definitely not.

Next we come to the arthropoda, or insects. Most people, of course, find insects fairly repulsive—and yet, if one will but look, there is exquisite beauty in the insect world. Who does not remember the lovely insect poems of William Cullen Bryant—such enchanting lyrics as *Twinkling Along with the Tumbling Tumblebug, Fly Gently, Sweet April, and Great My Mother Taught Me*. Mr. Bryant has been inactive since the invention of DDT.

Our next category is the mollusca—lobsters, shrimp, and the like. Lobsters are generally found under rocky projections on the ocean bottom. Shrimp are generally found in a circle around a small bowl containing cocktail sauce. Marlboro Cigarettes are generally found at any tobacco counter or vending machine.

What have Marlboro Cigarettes got to do with biology? Well, actually, not very much. It must be remembered, however, that the makers of Marlboro pay me for writing this column, and they are inclined to get surly if I fail to mention their product.

Mind you, I enjoy singing the praises of Marlboro—and so will you once you try that flavorful tobacco, that fine filter which lets the flavor come though undiminished. It is a great pleasure to smoke Marlboro and a great pleasure to write about them, but sometimes, I must confess, I find it a bit difficult to work the

commercial into the column. Some years ago, for example, I did a piece about Alexander the Great, and, believe you me, it took a heap of stretching to drop in a plug for Marlboro. The way I finally managed it was to have Alexander go to the Oracle at Delphi and say, "Oracle, I have conquered the world and tasted all its pleasures, but somehow I am not content. I know that somewhere there must be a joy I have not yet experienced." To which the Oracle replied, "Yes, Alexander, there is such a joy, but, alas, the time is not yet. I refer to Marlboro Cigarettes which will not be invented for another 2500 years." Whereupon Alexander fell into a sulk from which he never recovered... Well sir, there is no question I sold a lot of cigarettes with this ingenious commercial, but the gang down at the American Academy of Arts and Letters gave me a mighty good razzing, you



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may be sure.

But I digress. Back to biology, and the most advanced phylum of all—the chordata, or vertebrates. There are two kinds of vertebrates—those whose backbones run horizontally and those whose backbones run vertically. Generally, there is no great difficulty in distinguishing the two varieties. A fish, for instance, has a horizontal backbone, and a man has a vertical backbone. Occasionally, however, you run into a problem—like a fish who swims upright and a man who spends most of his time in the sack. How, in such a case, do you tell one from another? Science struggled with this sticky question for centuries, but finally Signoros of M.I.T. came up with a brilliantly simple answer. Offer the creature a Marlboro. If it is a fish, it will refuse. If it is Homo sapiens, it will accept. In fact, the more sapient, the quicker the acceptance.

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The makers of Marlboro, upright vertebrates all, remind you that their fine cigarettes are available in pack or box wherever cigarettes are sold in any of the 50 states.